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Barringer, Richard oral history interview

Andrea L'Hommedieu

Interview with Richard Barringer by Andrea L'Hommedieu

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee
Barringer, Richard

Interviewer
L'Hommedieu, Andrea

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Place
Portland, Maine

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Biographical Note

Richard E. "Dick" Barringer was born on November 21, 1937 and grew up in Charlestown, Massachusetts. His father was captain of the guard at the Charles Street jail and his mother was the daughter of Portuguese immigrants. He attended Harvard and served in the Coast Guard from 1959 to 1967. He earned his Ph.D. in Economics and Political Science from MIT, then taught at Harvard. He is the author of two books: *The Maine Manifest* and *Changes*. He became Director of Public Lands in Maine in 1973, and was appointed Commissioner of Conservation in 1975. He ran for governor of Maine in 1994. He is married to Martha Freeman, daughter of Stan and Madeleine Freeman, who is the author of the book: *Always, Rachel: The Letters of Rachel Carson and Dorothy Freeman, 1952-1964.*

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: family background and education; environmental protection (bug worm infestation); Charlestown, Massachusetts; voting scandal; 1980s education reform; Maine university system and the relationships between them; Muskie School for Public Service; and the Maine Education Commission.

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Transcript

Andrea L'Hommedieu: This is an interview with Mr. Richard Barringer at the Muskie School for Public Service, at 49 Exeter Street in Portland, Maine on March the 25th, the year 2002. This is Andrea L'Hommedieu. If you could start just by giving me your full name and where and when you were born?

Richard Barringer: Richard Edward Barringer, I was born in Boston on November 21st, 1937 to Helen Silva and Walter Barringer.

AL: And did you grow up in the Boston area?

RB: I grew up in Charlestown, my parents lived in Charlestown. And, grew up in Charlestown in the same home in which my mother was born, a three-decker on Bunker Hill Street right next to a very beautiful park, playground, and -

AL: Is that in the Cox Hill area?

RB: No, no, this is at the very top of Bunker Hill Street, just down the street from that great Catholic Church on the top of the hill where I was baptized and where my parents were married.

The park was designed by the great landscape architect who did the Central Park and Boston Common, I've forgotten his name right now. Very beautiful park, so we were very fortunate to grow up there. Attended St. Francis (*unintelligible word*) grade school, elementary school, taught by Dominican nuns, was an altar boy, head altar boy at St. Francis (*unintelligible word*) church on top of Bunker Hill Street. One of six children, I'm the third of four sons and in between two girls, all of whom are still alive. My father is dead, my mother still lives in Charlestown in an elderly housing facility. After St. Francis I went off to Latin School, not that I wanted to but that, my eighth grade nun and my older brothers told me to, which turned out to be a real turning point in my life.

AL: In what way?

RB: Well, Latin School is an extraordinary place, and I think most of the habits that I acquired that have served me in adult life I acquired there. Most of the good friends I've kept all my life I met there, and most of the best teachers I've had in my life were there. So it was really, it was a real revelation that, first of all the ethnic diversity of the place; there were Jews and blacks and Chinese and Lithuanians and Poles and -, this was from 1951 to 1955 when there were a lot of children of immigrants. It was just a real eye opener to be confronted with so much talent in so many different diverse dimensions. I mean, there were musicians and athletes and writers and poets, and scholars of Latin and Greek and romance languages. It was quite extraordinary.

So, I loved Latin School, had a great time there, and through some quirk of good fortune, which I guess I didn't know, ended up going to Harvard College. I never expected to go to college, was the first person anywhere in my family that had ever gone to college. And I think I went there because I just happened to have the good fortune to be interviewed by the dean of the college who took a liking to me, thought I was an interesting person for some reason. And, so I went up to Harvard College, which wasn't very far from Charlestown, two and a half miles, but it was like three hundred years. I mean, it was just such a different culture from where I'd grown up. Charlestown in those days was a longshoreman community and a factory town, very rough and tumble, a lot of criminality, a lot of poverty. Of all the kids, I got out of - kids who were with me in St. Francis, I think only two of us went to college, that is, my class at St. Francis. It was just a, it was a very rough, tough place. And to go from there off to Latin School and then Harvard College was just mind boggling, it was truly mind boggling.

AL: And your mother had grown up in that same town.

RB: Yes.

AL: In the same house.

RB: But my mother had, my mother had a high school degree, which in those days was really quite unusual. Her parents had sent her off to a Catholic high school in Watertown, but she got, she got there on a daily basis by traveling the trolleys. So she had a good deal of respect for education; it really was her influence that, all of her children eventually graduated from college, which was remarkable, I mean it really was truly remarkable, six kids all from, going on to higher education. I can't think of any other family in Charlestown that accomplished that.

Her father was a Portuguese immigrant who was a jack-of-all-trades, a barber, fisherman. Ended up working for the city of Boston as a head of one of their public works divisions, and was in charge of Charlestown and the north end. He, when he came to this country, his family lived in the north end when it was largely Irish, and he was part of the wave of Portuguese, and Italian and Greek and Jewish immigrants who moved into the north end, and the Irish kind of moved out to Charlestown and Somerville and Dorchester. He then bought this three-decker in Charlestown for, as I recall, was about five or six hundred dollars, just after the turn of the century, and raised his family there. He lived on the third floor, then my mother married - he rented out the first two floors - my mother married, she went off to live about six blocks away with my dad. The following year, the second floor became empty and she moved back. So until she moved into the elderly housing at the age of eighty-five, she'd lived eighty-four of her eighty-five years in that house. Which is a great (*unintelligible word*). We've since sold it, unfortunately, because there were none of us there, but I think of it all the time; it was this wonderful house. So my grandfather was up on the third floor, we were on the second floor, and then he always rented the first floor. And the rent on the first floor most of my life was twelve dollars, and then when I was in college it went up to fifteen dollars, I remember that quite vividly. Today rents are fifteen hundred dollars a month. It's craziness.

I loved growing up in Charlestown; it was very accessible to Boston. We'd walk to the Boston Garden, to Fenway Park, to the museum, the library. I just spent my youth walking around Boston, taking the MTA which was only a nickel in those days. You could get on anywhere for a nickel and get transfers and go into Boston, you could spend the whole day riding around the city on the metropolitan. It was then the Boston (*unintelligible word*) Railways, now the Metropolitan Transit Authority, or the Mass Bay Transit Authority now. So really it was quite a wonderful time growing up.

AL: Yeah, and that was the north end of Boston?

RB: That was Charlestown. My grandfather moved to the north end, which is now the big Italian district, but then he moved to Charlestown which is just across the Charles River, where the monument is. But he moved up to the top of Bunker Hill Street. The monument was actually on (*unintelligible word*) Hill, it's called Bunker Hill Monument but it's on (*unintelligible word*) Hill. On the top of Bunker Hill is St. Francis (*unintelligible word*) Church.

AL: Now, what year were your mother and father born?

RB: Well, my mother's eighty-nine, so she would have been born in 1913, and my father was six years older than she, so he was born in 1907.

AL: Did either of them ever talk about, or have recollections of, the Spanish influenza that went through the city in, I think it was, 1919?

RB: It was 1919, but I don't recall them ever talking about it.

AL: Or did they ever mention the great molasses flood?

RB: Yes, yes, my father spoke of that very often in fact, and how devastating it was to the north end. It happened in the north end, and they did talk about it as kind of a, you know, a seminal event in the city, you know, that really was one of the very few large natural, not natural, but industrial, industrial disasters of the city. That was all.

AL: Yeah. Now, but you said, was Charlestown, religiously, was it Catholic, mostly Catholic?

RB: It was virtually all Catholic. There were three, Charlestown's about one mile square, and when I was growing up there there were twenty-six thousand people living in it, so it was very densely populated, twenty-six thousand per square mile. There's, there's almost nothing like that in New England, I don't think there's any population density in New England that is that great today. There were three, really prosperous big Catholic parishes, and two relatively small Protestant churches, an Episcopal and a Methodist, which didn't prosper very well. And there was a good deal of, prejudice is too strong a word, but the Protestants and Catholics didn't socialize. It was very clear that I shouldn't date Protestant girls, for example, you know, it really was, it was a very strong, largely Irish Catholic working class community with very strong borders around itself. That changed dramatically in the sixties and seventies, but back in those days it was a very parochial, insular, very, very Irish Catholic community. The parishes were very strong; they all had athletic teams and dance schools and youth associations, and elderly associations, and charitable organizations, and they were quite highly organized. They were, today St. Francis has a single priest who is the pastor and runs the whole show. In those days, there were always at least four priests in our parish, and sometimes five. The Catholic school was oversubscribed; they had a house full of nuns who ran the school, were very, very good teachers. And there were two others in the town that were similar, they had, St. Catherine's and St. Mary's. Both were about the same proportion, I think had four or five priests each of them, thirty to forty nuns running their school. It was really quite extraordinary by today's standards, nothing like it around today. It was a very supportive community, so long as you were a member of it, you know. It was not welcoming, however, of others. I remember one of the prettiest girls I knew as a teenager was a member of the Methodist church, I was quite mad I couldn't date her. I mean it just wasn't acceptable.

AL: And that came even from your family.

RB: Everybody. First person I fell in love with was Protestant, though, but from out of town. Interesting, from out of town, that didn't count. In town it would have been too complicated. I didn't feel a lot of pressure from my family about that so much as I felt from the community. When I was admitted to college, I had received a Naval scholarship, U.S. Navy scholarship, very prestigious scholarship back in those days, which would allow me to go anywhere. Virtually any college in the country would accept this. And I can remember that, I don't know how the word

got out, but, I went to confession one day to Father Murphy, who's since deceased, and he said to me, “I understand that you've received a very nice scholarship.” I said, “Yes, I have.” And he said, “You should be very proud,” and I said, “Yes, I am.” And he said, “Where are you going to go to college?” He said, “Are you going to go to Notre Dame or Boston College or Georgetown?” And I said, “Well, I've been accepted at Harvard and I think I'm going to go there.” He was furious, he was really furious. I mean, he stopped confessions, you know, he wanted to, he and I had to go have a talk. It was just not acceptable to him that I would pass up the chance to go Boston College or Notre Dame, because I could have gone to any of those. I mean, the Navy scholarships were accepted at virtually every college in the country, and if you got one the assumption was that you could pretty much get in anywhere you wanted because they were so prestigious. And when I told him I was going to Harvard he was furious with me, really furious. Didn't speak to me for ten, fifteen years.

AL: That long?

RB: Oh yeah.

AL: Oh, as you went, and went on.

RB: Yeah, as I went on, yeah, he was furious. It was a very parochial, insular, narrow. It's all part and parcel of what's going on in the church today, though.

AL: Well, yes, there's a lot of talk these days.

RB: Yeah, a lot of talk these days. It has its antecedents in that kind of ilk.

AL: Right. Your parents, were they involved in the community other than the social relation with the church, were they involved in civic activities or political?

RB: My mother never was, my mother really was, my mother was very scholarly and studious, she read a lot and really was very devoted to her family. My father was much more involved in the community. Boston in those days was an extension of the Curley machine, okay? I mean very much an extension of his machine, political machine. And I say that in kindly terms, I don't mean that in sort of negative. He was mayor when I was seven or eight years old, and I still remember, I have memories of that time. And the city was organized into districts, of which Charlestown was one, and each district had representation on the city council. And the city council was strong constitutionally, so that the mayor needed the council in order to do what the mayor wanted to do. And so the extension of Curley's operation really penetrated quite far down into the neighborhoods and districts of the city. And a man named Leo Consella was for many years the councilor from Charlestown, and by virtue of being the councilor from Charlestown he dispensed patronage, so that things like jobs in the schools, summer jobs, jobs in the WPA and so on were, Works Project Administration in the Depression and so on, were dispensed through this organization. So you had to be involved if you wanted to make a living, okay, and my father was very involved in that organization.

He, I don't know all the details of this whole thing, but in his thirties contracted a disease and began to lose his eyesight. He had been a, started out as a, he left school in the seventh grade,

sixth or seventh grade when his father died to help support his mother's family, and worked for the Associated Press as a runner, as a messenger around the city. And then he had a series of jobs in the trades, he was a teamster driving a horse and wagon, a carpenter, a rigger, a plumber, boiler maker, he was very, very skillful with his hands, and then started losing his eyesight and that was a real problem for him in his trades. And in this - But somehow or other got a guard's job, and I'm sure this is through this political organization, at the Charles Street Jail, which was the county jail, and rose through the ranks to become captain of the guard, which is the head of the guard detail, and worked nights at the local junior high school, helping to organize basketball games and movies and the kind of the array of social activities that were put on by the city at night for entertainment for kids, to keep them off the street and so on.

And that was all dispensed through, again through (*unintelligible word*) Consella, you see, through these, this organization. And in order to have access to those things, to support your family and help you know pay the parochial school education and then put them through college (*unintelligible phrase*), in order to get those things you had to be active in the political system. So that on election days we'd always be out distributing flyers and things like that, you know, we were never involved at the policy level, we just, we were always part of the machinery, the mechanics of just keeping that system going because there was a quid pro quo involved, that you did that so that jobs and, you know, and I had summer jobs doing things like lifeguarding at swimming pools and things like that from very early on as a result, as did my brothers and we all did *(?)*. We always worked, I mean I worked from the time I was seven or eight, started out working, helping, was a helper with a milkman delivering milk every morning, and then worked in a drug store for many years, and worked longshore, I had an uncle who was a steward in the longshoreman's union, so that Christmas vacation and April vacation and so on, my brothers and I would always work with him doing that, unloading ships. I used to drive what was called a chisel, it's a front end loader, taking stuff off the ships. And, and then got into the carpenter's union while I was in high school, and I did that summers all the way through high school and college. So, we just always worked to help support the family, and especially education. Very interesting. At least I thought it was interesting at the time.

AL: Did you, well, did you, sort of being a part of the political machine as a child and seeing your father being active, did that give you an interest in you know, public policy and, I mean sort of understanding how things work in government? Or when did that interest -?

RB: Well, I guess there were two things, one is that we always talked politics around the table, dinner table, you know, just what was going on. My father was just an inveterate fan of Franklin Roosevelt, I mean he just adored Franklin Roosevelt, felt very much that he had saved my father's life, in effect. He kept the family going and just provided help to him, and so he was very grateful and really loved him. He also, he was really crazy about this country, just loved the United States and was an inveterate Democrat, just loved the Democratic party, was very, very loyal to it. I mean, one of my fondest memories as a child is being kept awake at nights, the nights of the national conventions my father would just listen to it until they stopped broadcasting, you know, I mean he just would stay, he had to stay up, he had to finish it. I can remember the 1948 convention very vividly, you know, and just how exciting it was and he was very, you know, just emotionally involved in that. But never actively participating at that level, his was always at the ground level, he was just one of the troops. So he always talked politics

around the table, so he was very interested in that. And I think my own interest in it was sparked by my time in the military.

AL: What years were you in the military?

RB: From, I enlisted in Coast Guard in 1959, and between active and reserve duty I was in until 1967, and did a lot of traveling in Latin America and I was really appalled by the, both the poverty and the politics of Latin America at the time. It was very poor, and very dictatorial, and it just really distressed me, I was very, very unhappy about it. I was appalled by it, in fact, I just really couldn't get over it, and it was all clearly, I mean, here we are, we're traveling around in these lovely ships and going in, having these, in the evening there was all these kind of parties at the embassies and so on, and clearly there was a disconnect I mean, between the lives that we were living down there and the lives that most of the people were living there, and I was really quite appalled by it. And I think it was a combination of maybe my Catholic, I mean, one of the (*unintelligible word*) things about growing up Catholic was this strong social conscience that was bred into us, I mean we really, there was a very strong emphasis on social justice, in the tradition in which I grew up. And I just really was shocked by it. I had been a math major in college and hadn't thought much about politics, really.

AL: A math major?

RB: Yeah, a math major. Although I took a lot of literature courses and social relations courses, and anthropology courses. Mostly I took math and science, and I was really headed in that direction. I'd been offered a job by IBM, coming out of college.

AL: And this was back in 19-?

RB: I was offered a job at the CIA, you know, they recruited very aggressively on campus, and if you had a degree in mathematics they really were after you, you know, I mean they just really liked people who majored in math because there were very, lots of applications that they could use you on. So, they had the most crews on campus in my senior year of anybody, CIA did. IBM had a big contingent, too. But I decided I really needed to get away from that. I'd been in school all my life, I just wanted to get away, see some of the world, have a different way of seeing the world, and I decided the military was the way to do that. Being in the military wasn't like what it is today, you know, people felt better about the military in those days.

AL: Oh, did they?

RB: Oh yeah, oh yeah, I think very much. It was before Vietnam, it was still kind of living within the afterglow of World War Two and, you know, how well that had worked out and how wonderfully the nation had mobilized and served and so on, people felt much more, well at least where I came from. I can remember going into the Coast Guard and being surprised by how many people I met from Maine, I mean really, there were just, as I recall in those days something like seventeen percent of all the people enlisted in the Coast Guard were from Maine, seventeen percent of the whole Coast Guard, and it was because, I mean, there's such a great tradition, there had been such a great tradition in Maine of association with the Coast Guard, lighthouses and

life boat stations and so on. And they did it as a career advancement, you know, it was a way of getting ahead in life, getting some benefits so you could go to college or something afterwards. It was a way out of poverty for a lot of coastal kids, you know, and they were great, they were wonderful.

So, I decided after being in the military that I was going to come back and go to graduate school in government and economics, and so I did. When I got out I spoke with a friend who was an attorney. He urged me to be an attorney, and I told him I didn't think that was for me. Although in retrospect, I probably should have gone to law school. But, in any case, I said, no, I really want to learn more about government and politics, government and economics, and so he suggested that, the University of Massachusetts had a very good program in developmental economics at that time and I ought to go up there for a year. So I went up and visited around, and I was able to get a graduate assistantship there and so I spent a year there. And while I was there, I met a man who was a visiting professor from MIT and we became quite good friends. And, the result of that was the following year, rather than staying at U Mass, I came down to MIT to enroll in their new program in political science and economics. And, so that's where I got my doctorate, and what was great about that was that they really were very into developmental economics, which was what I was very interested in. That is, how you take very undeveloped places and help them to develop. And so I spent most of my graduate work doing that, which then took me to the late 1960s, and I finished there and was offered a job back at Harvard. I mean, you know, here I am still hanging around Massachusetts.

AL: And your priest still not speaking to you.

RB: That's right, that's right, Father Murphy's still not speaking to me. Meanwhile, he had been reassigned to be the pastor of the Holy Name parish in West Roxbury, which is one of the most prestigious appointments in the archdiocese of Boston, so he's become a pretty high muckety-muck now, monseigneur, a monseigneur (*unintelligible word*). So I went up taught at Harvard for a few years. While I was there I asked to, if I, I was teaching a seminar on state government and, state government and the Massachusetts economy, and a state legislator was (*unintelligible word*) and lo and behold if he didn't turn out to become appointed the chair of the Massachusetts Bicentennial Commission in 1976. Every state, the federal government paid for every state to have a bicentennial commission, and he took this thing over and it turned out to be a real quagmire. I mean, it was rife with corruption, and quite serious, and really serious problems, and he asked me if I would take it over, take over the director's position of that commission for a period of two years to try to straighten it out. And who offered me a good deal of money to do this. In fact, about almost twice as much as I was making teaching, so I said yes.

AL: Hard to pass up.

RB: Hard to pass up, right. And I went, and I had a great time doing it, you know. It was really, Frank Sargent was governor of the Commonwealth at the time, was Republican, and there was a Democrat legislature in both branches, and this commission was appointed by a senate president, speaker of the house, and the governor, there were about twelve members and each appointed four. And it was, it turned out to be really, I was really fascinated by the experience. And I had a good staff, they gave me money to hire half a dozen people, and I really, really liked

Governor Sargent a lot. A very, just died last year, and very interesting, capable man who ran a sporting goods shop down in Cape Cod, was a very successful businessman, and a terrific politician. So I worked with his administration and straightened that thing out, and it worked, I mean it really, you know, it got, there'd been enough publicity surrounding it, the problems that happily we were able to straighten it out, and so I really enjoyed that. And meanwhile, I was still teaching some at the same time.

But then what, and the teaching involved me in, a friend who was born in Lamoine, the other side of Bar Harbor, had persuaded me to come visit his, his birth site in Lamoine, he now lived in Massachusetts. And while we were driving there, we saw this house for sale, this was in 1968, on Penobscot Bay, and we both saw it, and you could see it from the road, from Route 1, and we stopped and looked at it, and lo and behold if we didn't end up buying it, as a summer house. And so he and I and our, we had very young families at the time, started spending part of each summer there fixing this place up.

And I also was teaching a seminar at the Kennedy School on developmental economics, and there was a proposal at that time, this is now 1969, '70, to put an oil refinery into Searsport, which was right down the road from where this house was, my summer house, okay? So I brought the students from the seminar up, and we did an analysis of the proposal for the refinery, and it turned out that the analysis became very influential in the decision by, it was then the Environmental Improvement Commission, the predecessor of the DEP, the Department of Environmental Protection, when they made a decision I was asked to testify on the basis of this analysis, and was very instrumental in their vote against the refinery, this piece *(?)* analysis that my students had done. It was a great piece of work, it really was good.

And, one thing led to another, and John Cole, who was then the editor of the *Maine Times*, approached me about doing a book about the Maine, the prospects of the Maine economy. He'd received some money from a foundation, and he said, "If you would like to do that, then I'll give you, I'll get this money and you can use it to spend some time doing this." So I think it was the summer of '71, two or three colleagues and I took the summer off and just started looking at alternative development scenarios for the state of Maine. And it ended up in a small book that I wrote called *The Maine Manifest*, which was first published by the *Maine Times* as a tabloid, sold for ten cents, and then was subsequently published as a book and really got quite a lot of notice, and it's still used today in classes in the state, about the Maine economy. So, and it was the first time anybody had taken a, kind of a serious look at how Maine might develop, other than through kind of mega projects, you know, the big, big new whatever, sugar beets, or another big paper mill, or oil refineries on the coast or an aluminum smelt in Trenton, all of which were the kind of the popular ideas in the 1960s. And this proposed a very different path for development, one that was more ecologically oriented.

And, so that was published, and I'm still living down in Cambridge and working on the Bicentennial Commission. And that came to the attention of the Curtis administration with whom I began to have some connections because of, because of my involvement with Searsport and so on. And when the legislature created in 1973 the new Bureau of Public Lands to reclaim the state's public reserve lands, which is whole other complicated story, but they created it in 1973 to exercise the state's rights on a half million acres of land here in the state, which the paper

companies also claimed. Okay? The Curtis administration asked me to come here and be director of Public Lands. And, so my wife and I said, "Well, would we rather bring our children up in Cambridge, or bring them up in Maine?" Constantly, that was the question. And we decided we'd rather bring them up in Maine, so we moved up and I took that job, and that was in December of 1973, which was pretty risky because 1974 was going to be an election year, so the Curtis administration was going to be all over, you know? So I only had a job guarantee for a year, but I really loved being here, you know, I mean, the half dozen summers that we'd spent were kind of, each one would get a little longer and we put our children in the school a couple of times here, so we just really knew we wanted to live here and raise our children here. And then, so in the fall of '73 when offered the job I decided to come up here, and that's how we got here.

AL: And stayed.

RB: Yeah, well, I never regretted it, I mean, never, never, it was the best decision that I've ever made, really.

AL: Now you had the summer place in Searsport. Where did, what part of the state did you live in?

RB: We moved to Augusta, and stayed in Augusta until, for about ten years, and then moved to Hallowell, which is right next door, right down the river, and stayed in Hallowell until just four or five years ago when we moved to Portland.

AL: Now, how did you meet your wife?

RB: The wife? Well, I was married once before. I met my first wife when I was in the Coast Guard and we were married for seventeen years, until about 1980. Right. Then, let's see, 1979, we separated in 1976 and were divorced in 1979. And, by that time I was living in Hallowell and Martha was working, Martha is my wife, my second wife, was working for the Maine legislature at the time, and she was at that time, she subsequently became director of the Office of Policy and Legal Analysis. At that time she was the staff person for the Local and County Government Committee and the Judiciary Committee. And I had just moved from being Commissioner of Conservation to being director in State Planning, and one of the things that we were working on in the State Planning office was the whole issue of manufactured housing. At that time, there were a lot of communities in Maine that had local ordinances against manufactured housing, in essence as a way of keeping low income people out. And we'd done quite a big survey of where these ordinances existed and what their effects were and found that they were really making it impossible for low income, low income and moderate income people in many communities, to afford a home in those communities. And so we prepared legislation that would make it impossible for local municipalities to simply ban manufactured housing. I'm not talking about motor homes. I'm just talking about pre-manufactured housing, you know, which is about twenty percent cheaper than stick built homes, and which in those days weren't always necessarily the best looking things, but they were the only things that really were available for low income folks.

And, so we prepared legislation and it was assigned to the local county government committee,

and I went over to testify in behalf of it, and lo and behold there's this beautiful clerk there, I mean a staff person. So, we got to know each other through that, and just started seeing each other. And, we've been married fifteen years so it was five years later we were married, it wasn't for five years. But, as my father likes to say, she's the best thing that ever happened to me. It's true.

AL: Well, it must have been quite a family to -

RB: We were both working in Augusta at the time, (*unintelligible phrase*).

AL: And you had, must have, I mean, she has quite a family history. And, did you ever have a chance to meet her grandmother, Dorothy?

RB: No, no, unfortunately I never did. I'm really sad about that. Her grandmother died, I believe, in 1977, so that was four years before we had met, so I'm very sorry. She's very sorry we never met, too, I mean, Martha is, she says that very often, how sad she is that I never had a chance to meet Dorothy.

AL: I read most of the book that your wife edited and compiled of the letters and it is wonderful.

RB: That's quite a labor of love. That probably is the principle reason that we weren't married for five years after we met, because she was working on it at the time. And I'm very glad she did, it was something that she had to do and I'm very glad that she did, and the way that a publisher liked it enough to publish it.

AL: Now, do you discuss politics around the dinner table with her?

RB: All the time, all the time. Well, her parents are very involved politically, very interested, and they really are very political people. In the noble sense, you know, I mean they just care a lot, and they know that politics matters a lot, and who wins matters a lot, and so they, we talk politics all the time. Yeah, It's fun. And happily we generally agree on the majority of things. So, but they're not only wonderful people, they're great friends, they really are, great people to have as friends just because they're so darn generous, giving, you know. They really are great people.

AL: Let me stop and flip the tape.

End of Side A
Side B

AL: We are now on Side B of the interview with Dick Barringer. The one thing I haven't asked you yet is when you were first aware of Muskie, and when you first met him?

RB: I certainly I was aware of him as a senator in the sixties. I can remember hearing of him when he was governor, but I was living in Massachusetts, so I can remember hearing of him

then. I was very aware of him as a senator in the sixties, and certainly was very, very aware of him when he ran for president. I was involved in the Johnson (*unintelligible word*) in Boston, the Johnson campaign in '64, and then the Humphrey-Muskie campaign in '68 in Boston. I didn't work in the '72 campaign just because I was very busy otherwise, but I'm sure that had he got the nomination I would have been involved in that campaign.

And then I came to Maine and Jim Longley appointed me Commissioner of Conservation in '74, '75, when he was elected. And that was the time of the great spruce bugworm infestation in the north woods, which up to that point had been treated by massive chemical spraying. And it was, there hasn't been a natural resource management issue of that dimension since that time in the state. I mean, it was really a very, very difficult issue, politically. The state had been spraying since the late 1960s, increasing areas, the federal government and the state government were picking up the whole bill, federal government picking up most of it and state picking up the rest, so in fact it was a subsidy operation with private landowners, which they didn't want to acknowledge. They saw this as a matter of the public interest. And I was given responsibility for this Commission of Conservation, and knew when I started that something different had to be done but that it was going to take a period of years to do it. One just doesn't walk in the middle of something that big, around which there's so much political energy and mobilization, and change it overnight. And, I'm trying to think of who the staff people were at that time. Charlie Micoleau was one, the deputy of the Department of Finance Administration named Jacobs.

AL: Charlie Jacobs?

RB: Charlie Jacobs was on that staff at the time. And I think it was Charlie Jacobs with whom I worked most, but Senator Muskie's office was the conduit to the federal money, okay? And, so every year there would be a delegation of people from the forest products industry who would take the Commission of Conservation, go down to Washington and meet with Senator Muskie about the money. And in 1975 or '6, 1975 that preceded (*unintelligible phrase*), it was too late to anything otherwise. But in 1976, we began to try to change things and to put, the only way that I could see to change things was to put the cost on the companies, a serious amount of the cost on the companies themselves for this operation, so that they would have some incentive to see it as other than a political problem. And they really had turned it over to their lawyers and said, "Here, you deal with this," rather than dealing with it as an economic problem and a (*unintelligible word*) problem. They were just spraying everything they possibly could, and somebody else was picking up the bill for them. And in order to discipline that, we had to put the cost onto them, and by putting the cost onto them they would then hopefully begin to discipline the amount of acres they would spray to simply those acres that they could reasonably foresee harvesting while they were still alive. Because once the bugworm is in there, it's going to kill everything. The only question is when. And you can't, if you can't get to a tree in the next ten years, ten or fifteen years, there's no point in protecting and spraying. But none of that discipline was being applied.

So, we introduced legislation to begin to change the program, and that took several years to get enacted, so by the end of the 1970s we now have this discipline in place. But in the meantime, I went down in 1976 by myself, without the delegation of people, to see Senator Muskie to talk to him about this, and it was the first time I had ever met him personally. And, this was the year

that Carter was going to be president, and I've forgotten, no, that's right, he was under a lot of pressure from environmentalists to stop sending this money out to spray, okay to spray the woods. And, so I went in to see him about this, and what I remember most about the meeting is how angry he was. I mean, he was really furious, because he felt himself in a real squeeze between this environmental pressure that he was getting, and he wasn't particularly sympathetic to the environmentalists on this score, but at the same time he wasn't particularly happy about his being the point person on getting money to serve the interests of the paper companies, whom, you know, he did not know to be particularly interested in anything other than their own narrow interests. And so the anger kind of came out at me, you know, he said, "What the hell are you doing in here asking for this money?" And I said, "Well, I guess I'm here because I'm paid to ask you for the money to start out with, and I don't have an alternative that's going to be in place very soon, it's going to take us several years to get this, you know, you can deny they money if you want, it's up to you, and you'll have something, you'll please them but you'll make them angry, and in the meantime we're doing the best that we can to change the system so that the incentives are proper and we'll get them to do the right thing," and eventually they did, but I said, "It's going to take several years if it's going to work at all." And he was just furious, just furious with me. I mean just, "What, how, what are you doing here asking for this goddamn money? I'm supposed to go down there and beg this committee for this money so we can go spray all the trees and save them? They don't need this money." I said, "I agree they don't need this money. They really don't need this money, but, you know, the legislature passes the law and directs me to do this, what the hell am I supposed to do? You can deny the, the money, and I'll just go down and say, 'Sorry Senator Muskie says, "No, no more."'" So, I mean really, the conversation went like that, it was, I was pretty astounded by it, you know, (*unintelligible phrase*).

AL: But you stayed in the room.

RB: Oh yeah. But he didn't, he got up and walked out. He walked (*unintelligible phrase*). But he ended up going after the money, government money. And happily, the following year, there were some very unpleasant incidents downeast. We had, one of the first things we did was to begin to introduce biological insecticides. And we were the first jurisdiction in the country to do this, the U. S. Forest service hadn't even done it. But we needed to, we needed to test them in the first year to see just how effective they'd be (*unintelligible phrase*) chemicals and so on. And they were applied from helicopters, and dammit if one of the helicopters didn't get shot at, down in Washington County by somebody that didn't want spraying going on. And, so the whole situation kind of exploded that year, and happily, to my everlasting thanks, a man named Dick Morton from Farmington, who was a legislator from Farmington then, ran a Chevrolet dealership in Farmington.

AL: Morton, right?

RB: Dick Morton, stood up as a Republican and said, "This has got to stop, you know, we're tearing the state apart." And he got the legislation to appoint a, what we used to call in those days a joint select committee, of legislators to take a look at this problem, and he served on it as chair. And he (*unintelligible word*) as a Republican, was able to kind of lead the reformulation of the policy that was created the following year, and really changed things. For which Muskie was very grateful, you know, I mean, he and I shared some correspondence over it a couple

years. But it was that (*unintelligible word*) was kind of a growing from it, and then Morton was working with leadership, he was very courageous in doing it because his party, and it's really the Republican issue largely, a combination of Republican and kind of affiliation with the companies and then labor union interest in the mill towns, you know. Of course the companies had scared the hell out of them, and they'd all show up for the hearings, you know, and make sure we get this money. So politically it was a very difficult situation, and he was very courageous and really helped to move the whole situation, and I've been very grateful to him ever since. (*Unintelligible phrase*), I know his granddaughter and I told her the story. Just a wonderful guy. So that really helped things, move things along. And, you know, our paths crossed from time to time as a result of that.

But then, the biggest interaction I had with him in those days was that he, agreed in (*unintelligible word*) of 1983 the U. S. secretary of education produced "A Nation at Risk", a big report on the nation's schools, it said the nation's schools are going to hell in a handbasket. Well, he used that to persuade Joe Brennan to appoint a commission on the status of education in Maine, to take a look at how Maine schools were doing. And that produced the biggest set of reforms in education policy in the state since the 1950s; it was really a terrific effort. And it also recommended that there be appointed a visiting committee to the university system to take a look at it, and Mr. Muskie agreed to chair that, that committee. And, that was a huge success in some dimensions, and he was really great. I mean, he just really -

AL: In what way?

RB: Well, in the way, first of all, that as is almost always the case, when he was asked to do something important he'd say yes, you know. And that's not always the case with these people, you know. I mean, it really is quite, in my lifetime he really stands out in that regard, that I don't recall ever a single occasion when he was asked to do something that everybody recognized as being important when he said other than yes. I mean, he just was always there to do things that really mattered. And that was one those things that really mattered. And, while not all the recommendations in that report were followed, to the university's regret, I mean, had the university system followed all the recommendations it would be a hell of a lot better off than it is today. But it's major recommendations, many of it's major recommendations were followed; it did improve the system, and mostly it got a big slug of money for the system which was needed after the Longley years *(?)*.

And it came in really because Mr. Muskie again came personally to the legislature to demand it. I mean, he just stood there and he said, in front of the appropriations committee, in front of the full legislature, and he said, “You have to do this,” you know, the university is generally hurting, that it has been hurt by the past half dozen years, in essence by the Longley years, Longley didn't particularly (*unintelligible phrase*) in terms of the university system, and that there needed to be this infusion of money that was serve the interests of the people of the state, which was always the bottom line, Mr. Muskie's bottom line. And the legislature ponied up, which was really great. I mean, it just was his personal appeal that really made that happen.

And he came to, we organized hearings all over the state, he came to most of those hearings, from Washington, and he was at that time out of public office and he was working for this law

firm, and he came up to most of the meetings and chaired them himself, and worked with the people who were on the staff for that effort to fashion what was to this day I think the best look at the university system that's ever been taken, and then followed through to make sure that things happened (*unintelligible phrase*). So he did a great job on that.

AL: And when did you start with the Muskie School?

RB: That's an interesting story. I came here in 1989, hard to believe it was that long ago, as director of the Muskie Institute, which had just been established by the university to bring together the graduate program in public policy and the, what was then known as the Human Resources Development Institute, which is now the Health Policy Institute, okay, it brought those two things together. And it was a shotgun marriage, it wasn't that they wanted to be together, they were just kind of pushed together administratively.

AL: Did they make sense, together?

RB: No, no, not really. They had very different cultures, one was a teaching operation, a little tiny teaching operation that was really falling apart. It was not being successful. And the Human Resources Development Institute, which was a very successful, soft money, research operation with no teaching at all, none. So it was just off by itself, and there were four or five such units *(?)* in the university here and the president decided they needed to be connected to a academic unit, because the academic units drive decision making in the university. And so she put that one together with this Public Program, and the director of the Public Policy Program had recently died, the chair of it had left to go work elsewhere, they had two unsuccessful searches for a director and a new faculty member that failed, and so it really was kind of keeling over and enrollments were dropping precipitously, and they fired another faculty member. It just wasn't working.

And, I had been a visiting professor up in Orono the previous year and was asked to come down here and see if we could straighten it out. And one of the first things I did was to take the vacant faculty position and to recruit Charlie (*name*) into it from the State Planning Office, because they had nobody here who was competent in teaching economics. And so I went and saw him and appealed to him to come and join us, and he did, he came down on a term appointment which is a fixed length appointment.

And that same year, we were invited by the National Conference of State Legislatures to, because of a personal relationship with the woman who was running it at the time, to bid on a, an RFP that they had out to create a summer institute for state legislators to go and learn about policy issues. And so Charlie and I put together a proposal in response to their RFP, and were chosen, lo and behold, one of the four finalists to go to Sante Fe, New Mexico to present our proposal to their board of directors, and the board would make the choice among the schools as to where this summer institute for legislators, national institute, was going to be. And the other finalists were Rockefeller Institute at SUNY Albany, the LBJ School at Texas, the Humphrey School, and Berkeley, yeah, and Berkeley. The Humphrey School is the University of Minnesota.

And so we made our presentation, Charlie and I, and it knocked their socks off. And the president of the National Conference of State Legislators was at the time a woman who was the president of the Texas senate, and she came over to me afterward and said, "If you fellas don't win this, there's no justice in the world, that was just a great presentation." So Charlie and I went out to Taos the next day, feeling very good about ourselves, and got back that night for the announcement and they said, we're going to give it to the University of Minnesota, to the Humphrey School. And we were in shock, and I spoke to the senate president from Texas afterwards and she said, "Well," she said, you know, "the way this is set up, the legislators who come to this every summer are going to have to get their legislatures to pay for it, to pay for their tuition to come up to -," and I said, "Right." And she said, "Nobody believed that anybody would pay to come to someplace called the Graduate Program in Public Policy and Management at the University of Southern Maine, when they might go off to Rockefeller Institute or the Johnson School or the Humphrey School." They said it just wasn't going to work in some public relations thing, they wouldn't be able to sell it to the legislatures. And I was really shocked. So Charlie and I flew home, Charlie and I were flying home, really disappointed because it would have been a big step ahead for us to -

AL: Plus she was telling you that the competition really wasn't based on merit.

RB: No, it was based on just having a big name.

AL: Public Relations.

RB: Yeah, a big name. So flying home we said, this is never going to happen again, we get a new name. So we thought, well who are the names, you know. Well, there's James G. Blaine, no one remembers James G. Blaine any more. Joshua Chamberlain, you know, and then there's Margaret Chase Smith, and Ed Muskie. Well, it was easy. So we agreed we'd see what we could do about *(?)* Muskie, so when we got back, really, the very day I got back here I called Don Nicoll, who was then in business downtown in Portland, and went and saw him and tried the idea on him. And I said, "What do you think?" and he said, "Oh, gee, it sounds wonderful. Except that Ed's got this place up there in Lewiston now, up at Bates, and that might be a problem." So we contacted Senator Muskie and I can remember talking with him on the phone about it, and he said, well, he says, "I really have to think about this pretty carefully because, you know, those people up at Bates have done a wonderful job with the archives, and I know they've got some plans for fundraising, and I don't want anything to compromise that, I mean just, you know, they've been a goodwill, I don't want to hurt them." So he said, "Why don't we, why don't you write this down and we'll send it on up to them and we'll see how they feel. And if they feel at all that this is gonna hurt them, then you can't go ahead." And I agreed, I said, that's, I said, "I wouldn't want to compromise something like that, that's perfectly fair." But lo and behold, I was really surprised that they wrote back and said, well, we see this as a nice opportunity for us, that maybe, you know, it's something we could work together with, which we did over the first several years.

AL: Who was the person you were in contact with at Bates?

RB: Well, there was Jim Carignan, and, was Hedley Reynolds still the president at that time? I

think he was.

AL: He may have been.

RB: I think he was. He and I had become, see, he was chair, he had been chair of the Commission on the Status of Education back in 1984, see, so he and I were quite good friends, and he also was, of all things, he'd been very good friends with Stan and Mad. Because Madeleine had been on their board, they're both Bates graduates, and Madeleine had been on their board of trustees for years. And so, you know, that's one of the nice things about Maine, I mean, you know, everybody's related to everybody else, you know. And so they responded very quickly and very positively, which surprised me, because most, you know, most universities and colleges are pretty grasping about things, you know.

AL: Territorial.

RB: They're very territorial, exactly. And they responded very graciously, and said, no, this sounds great and why not, because, you know, we think maybe this could be serendipity, you know, we both could benefit from it. So they wrote back and said fine, and so then I went to our president, who was not yet Rich Pattenaude, it was still President LaPlant who (*unintelligible phrase*), wonderful person. And she really liked the idea a lot and, she said, but the board of trustees has got to approve it, university system, okay. So I had to write a big five year plan, for the whole thing and so on, and sent it to someone on the board of trustees.

Well, by this time Bob Woodbury is now the chancellor, and there is this constant kind of, this is a true story, there's this constant kind of friction and tension between Orono and USM, you know, that Orono is resentful of USM because they think that USM takes money away from them that they should have, and it's a zero sum game (*unintelligible phrase*), we get this big share and therefore they don't get it. And when I was a visiting professor at Orono, Professor Jim Wilson and some other colleagues and I had put together a, been asked by the president up there at that time, Dale Lick, to take a look at what we could do about starting some kind of a policy research effort at Orono, and we had recommended creating one and we told how it should be done and what it might look like. And they were in the process of kind of putting that together, okay? Now, at the same time that we're now proposing the Muskie School, Muskie Institute. So lo and behold, the chancellor's office gets this proposal to create the Muskie School, and in order to make Orono happy and not be resentful of our getting this thing called the Muskie Institute, they created the Margaret Chase Smith Institute at Orono. So that's how, I mean, the two of them were in the same motion on the board of trustees agenda, that there will be created now the Margaret Chase Smith Center at the University of Maine in Orono, and the Muskie Institute at the University of Southern Maine, in exactly the same motion so that Orono would not feel that we'd gotten something and that they hadn't gotten their fair share, or something. So that's the territoriality, the grasping nature of these institutions. So, and Mr. Muskie as I think very pleased, we had a wonderful inaugural event, it was really very, very nice.

AL: And what year was that?

RB: That was '91, November of '91. There are some pictures of that over in Room 506 in a log of the event. I gave a very nice speech, he gave a wonderful speech, President LaPlant gave a great speech, and it was very well attended, very nice turnout by members of the community here and so on. And he was very loyal, I mean he really, you know, he showed up for all the meetings that we asked him to come to and, you know, really seemed to like what was happening.

AL: Now, over, that was '91, and he passed away in '96. During those four or five years, did he keep in touch with the Muskie School in any way, did he have an active connection to it?

RB: He was very responsive. I don't recall his taking many initiatives, but he was really very responsive to anything that we asked him to do, and he came to, we had, we used to have two board meetings a year and he'd come to all of those, and would spend time here with the students and with the staff. I think he enjoyed it very much, but what I remember most is just how responsive he is. I mean, you know, it was very easy to be in touch with him, he would get back right away if you'd ask him to do something like, you know, come up for a special event and he did it. We gave him an honorary degree in '94 here at the university, which was really very well received, you know, the audience loved it *(?)* and it was a very nice event. My biggest disappointment is that we weren't able to raise the money to create the edifice, you know, in his lifetime. But, you know, we were just coming out of the recession of the early nineties and the economy hadn't quite taken off the way it did subsequently. And, so the dream didn't materialize as quickly as we'd hoped.

AL: What is it that the Muskie School does or gives to the community and the state of Maine through education of its students that continues the legacy of Senator Muskie? Is there that sense within the school, or is it in honor to him?

RB: That's a good question. I haven't been as involved in the overall management of the school in the last several years as I had previously, so I'm not sure that my perspective on that is the best. But I've always felt that there was a dire need for a continuing source of well-educated and trained people to, to think creatively and to manage well the people's business here in the state. And there hadn't been that before the Muskie School came along. Orono had traditionally done a good job of training town managers, but it had never really produced people who could think about the larger issues and questions confronting the state as a whole, and to make information available that would allow people to, or help people to make decisions about difficult issues, and to provide a continuing stream of people who are, who understand the distinction between the public sector and the private sector and who have got the skills and the understanding to do the people's business well. And I really think that we're doing that. I mean I, I feel wonderful about the teaching I do here, and about the students that I encountered. I really do love teaching. If I weren't teaching, I wouldn't be here, I mean I really feel that, you know, that's really the reward, the payoff here.

And they come from such diverse backgrounds, and they are now beginning to permeate the fabric of public and non-profit, and to some extent private, enterprise in the state, you know. And, so that there's kind of a growing network of people who have associated themselves with Mr. Muskie's name and who are very proud of that, and who I think are doing, by and large, the

best work that's being done here in the state. And I think that's only going to grow.

I think that it needs to grow in ways that are probably different, in some sense, from what Mr. Muskie would recognize in that the problems have become so complicated that simply looking to the public sector for all the answers is no longer viable, feasible. You know, that they've become so complicated that in almost every important area of policy-making, there's a role now for the public sector, the non-profit sector and the private sector, and if they aren't all playing those roles we're not going to respond to those problems. There's just not enough public dollars around to do it. And so the problems have become more complex, and as a result I think the kinds of solutions that we're searching for are fundamentally different from the ones that people turned to in the sixties and seventies. But that's bound to happen, you know, and I like to think that we are, at least here in Maine, the place where those things are best going on, you know, where most of that work is being done and people now look to us to comment with some authority on events and prospects and possibilities. So I think that's, I think all of that's a tribute to him, and I certainly hope his family feels that way, and that it has the growing reputation and stature that there continues to be a commitment to public service that's represented in the name of the school. I mean, I really, we had some opposition among some members of the Board of Visitors to the name being, when we named it the School of Public Service, there were some people who didn't like that idea.

AL: From the Muskie Institute?

RB: Yeah, when it came from the Muskie Institute to the school, but I think that that name really -

AL: Tells you more about what it does.

RB: Yes, yeah, it really, it reflects why we who are here do what we do, because we believe that, and I think he'd like that.

AL: I have one more question.

RB: Sure.

AL: Or maybe two.

RB: Okay.

AL: I just asked you about your ties, well prior to your Democratic primary race for governor in 1994, had you ever sought elected office? You were appointed by different governors to serve as commissioners and such, but was this your first run for elected office?

RB: That's right, yes.

AL: What did you like and dislike about it? I mean, what things stand out in your mind as most memorable?

RB: Well, there were two things I disliked, one was January and February, when nobody's paying attention and it's really hard work, and -

AL: And it's cold.

RB: And it's cold, and, oh God, that was really hard, you know, and people just kind of get a little down, you know, and so you got to bully everybody, you know, and just keep it going. It's really quite hard. The other part was begging for money, really begging for money. From friends, from strangers, from anybody you encountered, you know, that is, that takes a special kind of person I guess to do that a lot. That was very hard.

Otherwise, if you have the physical stamina to get through all that, the best part honestly, this may sound trite, but Maine people are so incredible. I mean, it just, I can't believe this is true everywhere else, but you know, to drive to Aroostook county and show up for a party at nine o'clock in the morning on a Sunday, and you walk in and there's this fabulous spread of food laid out, you know, forty or fifty people, this happened in Fort Fairfield, and I went over to my host, whom I'd never met before, a woman, and said, "My goodness, what time did you get up to do all this?" And she said, "Well, I never went to bed." I mean, she just stayed up all night and cooked, you know, so that at nine o'clock on a Sunday morning, when people came over to her house, there'd be this incredible spread of food, you know.

And I, just time and again you'd walk into situations like that where people would, just because you're running for office, and a high office, they took it as a real compliment to them that you'd come to their home, and they put out their best china, their best silver, their best food, you know, and really make quite an extraordinary event of it. And it happened so many times, I mean, it just, you can't help but be moved by it, I mean just how giving people are to somebody who is in earnest trying to change things, I mean, to make things better for them and for their neighbors, you know, for everybody. Quite remarkable.

I just, I'll never forget, I'm just marching in the, I think it was the Memorial Day parade in Camden, I was over there with a contingent of supporters, you know, and people were so kind. I mean, you know, they took it very seriously. And I was not a major candidate, and I was running, you know, pretty much as an underdog and an outsider. I finished third in a field of five, and people were very, very kind. I mean, they loved the fact that I was there, and (*unintelligible phrase*) win Camden. Yeah, I won Camden. Didn't win in too many places, I won in Camden. And the greeting was so warm and spontaneous and kind, you know, and then they had, there was a rally afterward and all the candidates spoke, and people really listened. Of course, by that time people were listening. See, the last few weeks, that's the best time. I mean, because people, well, as we learned in the, in that scandal back there in, when was it that John Martin, you know, that voting scandal in Augusta.

AL: Oh, that was, shoot, I don't know the exact year, but it was oh, late eighties, wasn't it?

RB: Late eighties, '88, '89. People in Maine really take voting seriously. I mean, it really means a lot to Maine people. And you really learn that when you run for office here, that this is

not to be taken lightly. And, you really get this sense that the ballot and everything that's behind it, these concepts of freedom and the union, you know, that really means a lot to Maine people. And that's really quite inspiring. I loved it, I mean I really loved, I loved running for office, I really had a great time doing it. Except for the damn money, and that was so hard, oh, God, it was constant. But otherwise, it's really, it's a, and it does give you a very, very different perspective on things from book learning. I mean, just to go and sit in people's kitchens and to see how they live their lives and what they tell you, and how earnest they are about their beliefs and that they want those beliefs to be honored. Now, I remember asking a woman one time, "What do you really want?" And she said, "I just want a voice, you know." She said it very powerfully, that she expected that her elected officials will give voice to her beliefs. Not necessarily the way she would *(?)* but just, she needed to have a voice. And I think that point's very deep in Maine people. It may be, you know, I've been asked several times if I regretted having done that, and I never have, it's never occurred to me. You know, I just, I really had such a good time doing it. No, good time's not the right word, I learned so much from it, I really just learned a great deal. It changed my life.

AL: Well I was going to ask you, you wrote your book *Changes* in 1990ish, before, about 1990, and then you ran in '94. So my question is, you wrote this book on recent Maine politics, and then you ran for governor in the primary, and what did you learn from your experience campaigning that you would have changed in your book? Or, do you know what I'm saying? Was there something that you learned campaigning for governor that gave you a different perspective if you had written that book later on? I haven't worded that very well.

RB: No, I think I know what you're driving at. I think what I learned is that, and this is something that I think Mr. Muskie agonized over, in that he really believed that elections exist for the primary purpose of educating people into what they need to know about the issues that are coming before them, which is a classic kind of a Jeffersonian view of elections. And he watched, in his later years, elections become dominated by mechanics and polls and money and attack ads and so on, which was just the antithesis of using elections to educate people. And what I discovered was that there are a lot of cynics out there now, about the electoral system, but you really can't, I mean, in this system you can't take people anywhere until they're ready to go there. And part of getting them ready to go there is education, I mean you just have to educate them into being ready to go where you want to take them. Just because you've got some ideas about where the world would be a better off place, you still have got to somehow or other recognize, as FDR once said, that you can only go as far as the people will let you go, and until they're ready to let you go somewhere you can't take them anywhere. You really have to bring them along with you. And that becomes very, very evident when you run for office, you know, that unless the foundation has been laid, unless people are paying attention, unless you're persuading them, you know, unless you're explaining where you're going and you really are persuading, you can't take them anywhere. You know, now, we haven't resolved that issue because elections still are run by mechanics, you know, and attack ads and money, and so it's a real dilemma for democracy. And I don't, you know, I don't think the media's doing as good a job now as they did thirty, forty years ago, and so I think that's part of our problem these days. I think it's a problem that Mr. Muskie recognized that we still haven't resolved, really.

AL: I'm about to run out of tape, and I think you've run out of time, so I'm going to say thank

you very much.

RB: Oh, it's my pleasure, Andrea, thank you very much.

End of Interview